PERCEPTIONS OF THE REORGANIZED HIGH SCHOOL PROGRAMME FOR NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR SCHOOLS

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Preface

This study was conducted in the spring of 1982. Three of us, Robert Crocker, Philip Nagy, and I, travelled throughout the Province interviewing those most affected by the new high school reorganization. We sought their views on the foundations of the innovation, its goals, evaluation, and problem areas. Our aim was to provide an overview of people's attitudes and beliefs at an early stage in the innovation, to seek some general conclusions about how the programme was working, and to offer some insight into which areas might profitably be studied in the future. Crocker, Nagy and I shared equally in conducting the interviews, and Crocker and Nagy also assisted in the design of the interview format. This report represents my analysis of that interview data. Both Crocker and Nagy endorsed the report as generally capturing their sense of the interviews, but they did not analyze the data systematically. The interviews on which my analysis was based were conducted almost a year ago. The actual analysis was completed before mid-September, 1982, while the issues were still quite fresh in my mind.

Those reading the report will notice that there is a section describing the views of each group: Department of Education employees, district office people, principals and teachers. Each of these sections stands somewhat on its own, so anyone not interested in all aspects of the study can concentrate only on the ones of interest. It should also be noted that the style and format is emergent. In the first section on the Department, comparisons of views with those in other groups could not be effectively made, since the views of those others had not to that point been presented. In discussing the views of district office personnel, comparisons with Department views were made. While discussing the views of principals comparisons with the first two groups were pointed out, and finally while presenting teachers'

views comparisons among all groups were discussed. Throughout the report ideas are woven into the analysis as they emerged from the particular group being discussed.

Thanks are extended to those teachers, principals and district office personnel, and Department of Education officials who cooperated by freely offering their time and thoughtful consideration to the questions we asked. I also thank Jeff Bulcock, Robert Crocker, Wilfred Martin, Philip Nagy, Brose Paddock, Thomas Pope, Cecil Roebothan, William Spain and Arthur Sullivan for helpful comments.

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I PURPOSE AND OVERVIEW

In this study a picture is presented of how people in various sectors of the Newfoundland educational community were feeling and of what they believed during the spring of 1982 about the new high school reorganization. The high school reorganization marks one of the largest changes ever made in the Province's educational system. It is comprised of two components: the lengthening of high school by one year and the addition of many new courses, and the introduction of a credit system of advancement in place of a graded system. Given the significance and extent of this innovation, people's views on its fundamentals should be important, especially if they can contribute to some present or future assessment of the change.

We attempted in this study to solicit the views of individuals in various positions within the educational system on the foundations of the programme: on its goals, the motivations for those goals, the manner in which its success should be evaluated, and on the problems which people were experiencing or anticipated. Consensus as well as divergence of views on these issues will likely be consequential for the success of the programme. Although particular consequences cannot be dependably predicted, any specific points of consensus or of divergence could lead to more detailed studies in which specific effects could be sought. In addition, these perceptions obtained early in the innovation could serve as baseline information that might be used as a starting point in future evaluations of the programme.

The study began with an analysis of Department of Education documents concerning the high school reorganization, and with interviews of those in the Department most closely associated with the innovation. These documents and views carry the official Department of Education position on the reorganization, so one

might expect to find in them the most complete and coherent versions of the rationale for the innovation. As word of the innovation spread through the system one would naturally expect the rationale to be subjected to certain influences tending to alter its content. Thus, the views of those in the schools and in the various district offices might deviate in one way or another, desirably or undesirably, from the conception held by those at the Department. One interest we had was to discover and document any such deviations.

For our purposes twenty-five school districts were randomly selected from those in the Province. From each, one school was randomly chosen from those schools that could be reached by either commercial airline or car. We were able to meet with and interview each of the superintendents and twenty-three of the school principals. We then interviewed other district office personnel and teachers, depending upon their involvement with the reorganization, their availability, and upon the time available. We made notes at the time of the interviews of the views which these people expressed. There was one school which we did not visit because the principal thought neither he nor his staff had anything to say at such an early stage in the reorganization.

With teachers, because of the problem of interviewing a large enough group to be representative, we also used a written questionnaire to supplement our interview data. These interview records and the results of the questionnaires sent to teachers from twenty-four of the twenty-five schools form the basis of our portrayal of teacher views.

We decided not to interview officials of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association, of the Denominational Education Committees, or of the Federation of School Boards. Although we have no doubt that these people have much to say that is important about the reorganization, we sought the perceptions of those who were in the

direct line of the dissemination of the philosophy of the reorganization. For example, we sought the views of teachers rather than those of NTA officials, and of district office personnel rather than school board officials since it is teachers and district office staff who will directly determine what happens in the classrooms as the innovation is implemented.

The results presented here naturally and inevitably were influenced by the particular purposes, training, and background assumptions of me as writer and interviewer and of the other two interviewers. Each person sees the reorganization through a particular set of filters. Officials of the Newfoundland Teachers' Association see the reorganization through one set of filters, Department of Education officials see it through another, and teachers, principals and district office people through yet other filters. One of our aims is to present a picture of the reorganization as seen through yet another set of filters, but through one that is affected differently than others by particular expectations and desires about the fate of the reorganization. Our positions are relatively unaffected by the reorganization enabling us to reflect in a balanced way upon the views of all those who are directly affected.

The report should be useful to anyone involved in education in the Province. It informs those in each educational group, teachers, principals, district office personnel, Department of Education officials, etc., of what those in the other groups feel and believe about the early stages of reorganization. It similarly informs those in one part of the Province of the thinking of those in other parts. Besides being informative, such information can as well be comforting, motivating and interesting. In the end we hope the report might, in the words of one Department of Education employee, help bridge the gap in thinking "between those in the Department who have done the planning and those in the school

boards and schools who must do the implementation". As the report will show such a gap does indeed seem to exist.

II METHODOLOGY

An interview was the prime data gathering technique in this study because we judged that interviews would most effectively yield the type of information we were seeking. We hoped in this study to report an initial exploration of the types of attitudinal and personal belief factors which might be influencing the high school reorganization. As part of this task we attempted to uncover existing institutionalized norms and procedures. In essence we were treating the educational system as a sociological phenomenon and thus turned to sociological methodology for guidance. It has long been recognized that the interview is "the basic source of sociological data" to "be complemented by other methods but never replaced".[1] Some would go so far as to say that the science of sociology is in effect the science of interpreting the interview.[2]

Interviewing formats are widely accepted as the most efficient for suggesting which relationships, causes, effects, and processes exist in a social system,[3] and of which types of social standards prevail.[4] It was precisely a broad scan of these issues which we sought.

Interviews vary widely in their degree of structure.[5,6] A highly structured interview, or standardized interview, consists of one set of questions given in the same order to all respondents. The desired outcome of such an approach is the elicitation of information on common issues from all respondents. However, there is interference from the fact that respondents with different perspectives interpret the same questions differently. A focussed interview, or semistandardized interview, consists of a fixed list of questions, the wording and ordering of which are altered for each respondent. The aim is to increase the chance of reaching

the goal of standardized interviews (views on common issues from all respondents) by grounding the interview in the respondent's perspective. In an open interview, or unstandardized interview, there is neither a fixed set of questions nor a predetermined order of questioning. The interviewer has a sense of the information needed and gauges the tone and emphasis of the interview to suit individual respondents. Different individuals have different areas of interest and expertise, and the open interview allows the researcher to capitalize upon these. Given the broad range of perspectives of our audience, Department of Education to the classroom, we chose the open interview format.

One principle which guided our study, and this report of it, is that people's beliefs and feelings are important regardless of their validity, for they are the basis upon which people act. Furthermore, we believe that significant views, those that are particularly cynical, complimentary, insightful, or unusual, should be made known whatever their prevalence, since high frequency of occurrence is not the only indicator of importance. For this reason we often devote as much or more time to a view expressed by only one person or by a small number of persons as to a widely held view. We hope that people can learn new things from this report. Presenting views of individuals which we judged insightful is one way for this to happen. Some experts on interviewing techniques argue that interviews can be judged successful "precisely to the degree that they elicit cynical rather than idealistic attitudes". We elicited both in good measure, whatever this means for the success of the study.

Percentages used throughout to indicate frequencies of occurrence of particular views should also be interpreted cautiously. Given the size of the samples, these percentages can reflect no more than orders of magnitude, rough indicators, of frequencies in the entire population. This suggests they should be treated carefully, but not completely discredited. They are given for

this purpose and conclusions were drawn taking this fact into account. It is also the case that many statistics are not complete. For example, if it is reported that X% of a particular group believed a certain thing this does not imply that (100-X)% did not believe that thing or believed its opposite. In most situations only the first type of statistic was available, the other being an unknown. None of the general conclusions of this study, however, rest on having precise statistical information. Our conclusions can tolerate substantial fluctuations from population statistics without detriment.

III RESULTS

The following general conclusions highlighted our findings. Three directly address people's perceptions of the reorganized high school, while one is about the interpersonal relations which exist in the educational system as a whole.

1. The high school reorganization is not generally considered an innovation designed solely to meet the three goals (increased student maturity, a broadened curriculum, and alignment with the rest of Canada) offered in official Department of Education documents.

2. Many of the expectations for the reorganization are in no clear way connected with outcomes which might reasonably be expected, given the changes which the reorganization entails.

3. Many spoke of those in other educational sectors as if the others were adversaries, interfering with what was in the best interest of education.

4. Finally, as could have been anticipated from recent research on curriculum innovation, those from each educational group tended to focus on some issues of the reorganization unique to that group, and tended to fail to see some of the issues of most concern to those in other groups.

We found it helpful to organize people's views of the high school reorganization under the following topics: 1) stated or implied goals of the reorganization and priorities given to them; 2) explanations intended to clarify the meaning of these goals;

3) and perceived problems. Implied goals were found in people's responses to questions about the criteria for judging the success and failure of the innovation and to questions about the effects of the reorganization which they envision. Copies of the interview schedules and a copy of the questionnaire are in the Appendix.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION VIEW

The view of the Department of Education which we present results from an analysis of the Department's documents explaining the reorganization and of the interviews conducted with the Department personnel most closely involved with the innovation. We interviewed individuals from the level of minister to the level of curriculum consultant. The documents analyzed are as follows:

1. Report of Minister's Advisory Committee on Grade XII, December, 1978;

2. The Report of the Sub-committee on Curriculum Reorganization, August, 1979;

3. Handbook for Senior High Schools of Newfoundland and Labrador, October 1, 1980;

4. A Reorganized High School for Students of Newfoundland and Labrador: Information for Parents, no date.

Information from both the documents and the interviews appears side by side in this chapter within each topic discussed.

Goals of the Reorganization and Their Priority

Few explicit statements of the goals of the high school reorganization appear in the relevant Department of Education documents. The most explicit and straightforward one appears in an information brochure for parents which the Department distributed after the reorganization was announced. In answer to the question "Why reorganize?" the following are offered as the three main reasons:

1. To allow students to obtain a broader high school education.

2. To provide for a more mature high school graduate.

3. To bring high school programs in this Province in line with those in the majority of Canadian provinces.

These three issues, broadening the high school programme, producing more mature students, and achieving an equivalence with the rest of Canada, form the basis of the interviews we conducted and appear prominently in the documents on the reorganized high school. For example, in its report the Minister's Advisory Committee on Grade XII expressed quite clearly the desire to broaden the curriculum, and the view that the old system was inflexible and that within it students did not have the opportunity to follow their legitimate interests. We also found in the report of the Sub-committee on Curriculum Reorganization a rejection of the notion of extending courses in the old system in favour of broadening and diversifying the curriculum into different areas.

The other two goals stated in the brochure for parents, producing greater student maturity and bringing the Newfoundland system in line with the rest of Canada, appear, as intended goals of the reorganization, only by implication in other Departmental documents, and even then rather sparsely. Only the report of the Minister's Advisory Committee contains any suggestion of these goals. One can find discussions of student maturity in other Departmental documents but these are very brief, small in number, and do not appear in the context of outlining the goals of the reorganization.

This sparsity of clearly formulated goals in Department documents prior to the appearance of the brochure for parents might make some wonder whether, indeed, the reorganization was based strictly upon satisfying these three goals. The interviews with Department officials shed some light on this point. In these interviews the three goals in the parents' brochure received little real emphasis. In fact, rather than three clearly defined goals, there seems to have been a large set of dissatisfactions with the old system which members of the Department were facing, and to which they appeared to be responding. It seems it might have been

the accumulated weight of all these problems which eventually led to the decision to change, not merely the three goals mentioned in the parents' brochure.

About one-half of the Department employees we interviewed mentioned broadening the curriculum as an aim of the reorganization and the same number believed it to be a priority. However, only one-fourth mentioned either the maturity issue or the issue of bringing the Province in line with the rest of Canada, even though both of these are stated goals in the latest Departmental releases on the innovation. None of the respondents mentioned these two goals as priorities. Besides these three aims many other reasons for reorganizing the high schools were offered by the Department people. About one-fourth mentioned each of the following: helping slower students more than brighter ones; basing the curriculum on the aims of education; attempting to provide a common component for all students; and providing a credit system. Furthermore, priorities ranged across a wide spectrum including the following: providing a greater proportion of social studies at the expense of mathematics and English; giving some students more opportunity by taking what have really been three year high school courses compressed into two years and giving them the three years they require; increasing post-secondary options for students; creating better citizens; and satisfying parents' desires to have their children stay home another year. It is thus evident that goals perceived by Department personnel extend well beyond the three outlined in the parents' brochure. It is not clear from the interviews whether the three stated goals can be considered major and the others minor. The possible exception is the broadened curriculum goal.

In response to a question about what they would consider criteria for judging the success or failure of the new programme (answers to which were taken as implicit statements of goals) three-quarters of the Department people said that a broadened

curriculum (one of the stated aims) would be a criterion, but three-quarters also said that more individualized student choice of courses would be a criterion, and this was not one of the stated aims at all. Furthermore, while about half of the people for each said that a lower dropout rate, increased critical thinking ability, greater ease of career choice, decreased academic emphasis in the school curriculum, and a narrowed gap between small and large school opportunities are criteria for judging the programme, almost equal numbers said that these are not criteria.

It is interesting that the straightforward view of the reorganization which appears in the most recent Department documents is not mirrored in the views of individual Department employees. In our judgement it is plausible that what happened in this educational policy change was probably quite similar to what goes on in any such matter of human affairs where an old view of things is replaced by a new view. We suspect, and the evidence for this is contained in what the interviewees said, that the motivation for the change was not the perception of some single pressing need. Rather, there was an accumulating weight of a wealth of problems with the old system, (examples mentioned ranged from "turning out 16 year olds more easily influenced by the trouble in residences at MUN" to "turning out people too young to go into the workforce when they didn't want to go on to post-secondary institutions") to which people at the Department were responding. This speculation fits well with accumulating evidence from studies of other educational policy changes, and from evidence on the process of change from one scientific theory or world-view to another. In this light the Department documents on the reorganization can be considered a tidied version of this thinking process, which does not reflect all that took place.

There was also a considerable divergence of views among Department people about evaluating the programme. This probably further indicates the wealth of problems perceived with the old system and,

perhaps, that fundamentally there is no clear agreement at the Department about what the high school change is supposed to achieve. Each member it seems views the reorganization somewhat from a personal perspective. Although this is understandable, any such disagreement is likely to have consequences when it comes time to evaluate the reorganization. As an example of one possible detrimental consequence consider the following situations. Suppose that it turns out under the reorganization that (whatever the cause) the dropout rate in our schools remains essentially the same as under the old system. Some in the Department indicated to us that this would be a mark of failure of the innovation while others that it would be an irrelevant statistic, at least with regard to evaluating the high school reorganization. Which are we to believe? Suppose, instead, that the dropout rate increases. Then, regardless of whether or not some Department people believe that the dropout rate ought to be used in evaluating the change, there will be pressure to investigate the increased number of dropouts. As part of this investigation it is likely the new high school programme will be examined as at least a possible cause. Similarly, if the dropout rate decreases, then the new high school programme will be considered as a possible cause. In other words, dismissing some widely accepted criterion of effective schooling, such as retention rate, as a mark of success or failure of the reorganization on the grounds that the reorganization was not intended to affect that factor, will be immaterial if indeed the innovation does affect that factor.

The Meaning of the Goals

The stated goals of the reorganization in the Department's brochure for parents contain the expressions "more mature students", "broadening the curriculum", and "in line with the rest of Canada". There are several possible interpretations that could be placed upon each of these expressions, so we looked to the Department of Educa-

tion's officials for clarification. The rationale was that if these expressions are central to statements of the intended aims of the innovation, then their clarification is likely to be important to any evaluation of the programme. Thus, for example, to find out whether or not under the new programme graduates are indeed more mature requires having at least a fairly good notion of what "more mature" means.

More mature students. From things written in the documents on the reorganization and from what the Department people said on this issue one is able to piece together a fairly broad notion of student maturity. The breadth seems appropriate here given the scope of the concept of maturity as we normally see it.

Four types of maturity are discussed in the Department sources: emotional, mental, physical, and social maturity. Emotional maturity, according to the members of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Grade XII, is related to a person's ability to live without the immediate support of family and community. The emotionally immature sixteen-year-old is, according to them, ill-equipped to be "suddenly cast adrift from a paternalistic school system and suddenly removed from the comfortable environment [sic] of home and community". The implicit assumption appears to be that schooling can help increase emotional maturity, and particularly that students one year older will be significantly more emotionally mature.

In their report, the members of the Sub-committee on Curriculum Reorganization spoke of emotional maturity somewhat differently, referring to the emotionally mature individual's ability to take responsibility and to see that his or her self-worth is not determined by grades achieved. The authors of the Handbook for Senior High Schools expressed much the same sentiment when they wrote that an emotionally mature person ought to be able to accept a realistic appraisal of his or her own progress but should realize that academic

progress is not the sole measure of human worth.

The notion of mental maturity received a somewhat broader treatment in the Department documents. The Curriculum Sub-committee wrote of mental maturity as "general intellectual development". The authors of the Handbook, however, commented at one point in their document that a person who is mentally mature is one "whose critical and other faculties are so developed and trained as to enable him to cope successfully with the varied problems and situations that he may be expected to encounter", and at another that mental maturity includes knowledge and understanding of human heritage and of the natural environment as well as a desire to make a positive contribution to the human heritage.

The Department's documents contain a somewhat more circumscribed view of the notion of physical maturity. Being physically mature is characterized as having certain knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with the maintenance of good physical fitness. For example, the members of the Curriculum Sub-committee wrote that "each student should leave school with the understanding, ability, and experience to follow an active program of health maintenance throughout life". In a similar vein the report stated that physical education courses are designed "to teach the student by study and practice how one's well being is influenced by physical condition, and to develop the capability to maintain fitness through leisure time activities". The authors of the Handbook reflect a similar emphasis on knowledge, skills, and attitudes in being physically mature, writing that an educated person is one who to the best of his or her ability is, among other things, "possessed of physical health, and a knowledge of, and respect for, his physical body; as well as a desire, and a knowledge of how, to take care of it and its functions".

The final aspect of maturity, social maturity, was defined in terms of understanding one's place in society in the Curriculum Sub-committee report, and as being able to interact in appropriate ways

with others in the Handbook.

The discussion of maturity with the people we interviewed seemed to focus primarily on university-bound students and the demands upon them which university life would make. For example, one remark referred to students ability "to benefit from the non-academic aspects of university life", another referred to the problems with sixteen-year-old students from out of town living in residence, and another to students' having to cope with the sex and drugs on campus. These are no doubt concerns which need to be addressed. But why were responses to requests for clarification of the meaning of "maturity" cast in the context of university life, as if either all high school graduates went to university or that only those who did needed to be mature? This orientation towards university life was not confined to Department of Education circles for it was also found in some district offices and in some schools. For example, some principals and teachers seemed naturally to cast their responses to our questions in terms of the effects of the new programme on the university bound, to the exclusion of all other groups. It is difficult to understand this emphasis, in light of the fact that little more than a quarter of all high school students actually will attend university.

In all these discussions of maturity a remark which stood out concerns whether or not maturity is something that schools can foster at all. A belief expressed by one Department person is that "schools keep kids immature longer" and that for this to change the atmosphere of high schools would have to change first. Schools would have to become "more mature institutions", places where students are given more choice and more responsibility, and are treated like adults.

Maturity, then, according to the Department involves many loosely defined things including: being able to get along on one's own, being able to accept responsibility, having a sound self-concept, having the mental development to tackle life's problems, and knowing how

to and desiring to care for one's health. One expressed reservation, though, is that schools as presently constituted are not designed to foster these traits, and probably in fact retard their growth.

As this report shows later there is quite a divergence of opinion on the level of student maturity and on how that level might be increased. One principal, for example, endorsed the idea of giving students much more choice of courses, saying that given the choice students will choose on the basis of their needs and interests, not on the basis of the difficulty of the courses. The principal suggested this was a mark of maturity. Another principal took a much different view asserting that it was "the function of the school to train students how to make choices in the future not to give them choice now". Such diversity exists in our school system.

Broadening the curriculum. The expressions "broadened", "more enriched", "diversified", and "more well-rounded" are used synoymously in Department of Education documents on the reorganized high school. These expressions are often contrasted with expressions such as "academically emphasized", and "academically restricted". The type of broadening, enriching, and diversifying discussed in the report of the Minister's Advisory Committee is one in which there would be a move away from a solely academic high school programme towards one that would also pay significant attention to "prevocational, technical, business and fine arts education", and allow students "to pursue activities reflecting individual interests and abilities". The report of the Curriculum Sub-committee contains a similar notion of a broadened programme within discussion of the specialized studies that should be included in the reorganized high school. "Specialized studies", the committee wrote, "are courses designed to extend students' knowledge in response to special needs or interests, and to prepare them for post-secondary studies or career entry". Under the heading

of "specialized studies" the Sub-committee included such courses as art, French, home economics, industrial education, and music, which is a list similar to the one written about by the Minister's Advisory Committee as an alternative to strictly academic courses. In addition to this positive insight into the meaning of "broadened curriculum", the Curriculum Sub-committee also indicated what a broadened curriculum is not intended to be. It concluded that no additional content or rigour need be added to such academic courses as English, mathematics, and science. The broadening was not intended to include a broadening in these directions. The authors of the Handbook for Senior High Schools endorsed this notion of a broadened curriculum found in the curriculum Sub-committee report, and adopted word-for-word the position which the Sub-Committee put forward.

In our interviews with the Department officials we did not pursue to a great extent the issue of the nature of the broadening which was to occur in the schools. To the extent that we did, the Department people reiterated the position found in the Department documents. There was much less divergence of view on the nature of broadening than on the nature of maturity. The key feature of curriculum broadening they pointed out is the provision of courses in more areas than the traditional academic ones without the attendant addition of more depth, "horizontal but not vertical change" as the jargon goes.

You will see that a broadened curriculum is the difference between the old and new high school organizations which is most apparent to every group in the system. This is understandable since, with the addition of another year, it is the most tangible change. At the same time, it seems to be the most favourably accepted aspect of the innovation.

In line with Canada. The goal of bringing our high schools in line with those in the rest of Canada is the one which received

the least attention in all our discussions and in the Department's documents. When mentioned, it was often suggested that this was the least important aim of the innovation or even that it was of no concern at all. In fact, the nature of the alignment envisaged by those at the Department is difficult to determine. Little information is provided for one attempting to discover what was meant. One is not sure whether alignment was sought on school leaving age, number of grades in high school, on programme offerings, on level of matriculation, or on any combination of these.

Perceived Problems

In general, each Department official viewed problems with the innovation differently from the others. The only problems mentioned regularly were lack of sufficient funding and lack of proper inservice education for teachers, each of which was mentioned by about half the people. These problems were mentioned regularly by those in other sectors also, indicating at least some common ground on perceptions of problems with the implementation. Other perceived problems include insufficient guidance facilities, inadequate material supply, a mismatch of teacher qualifications and the types of qualifications required to teach new courses, and teacher attitudes as expressed through the Newfoundland Teachers' Association. Each of these problems was mentioned by about one-fourth of the Department people.

Actually, some of the unique individual comments were the most enlightening aspect of the reaction to this issue. For example, one person suggested that a problem was caused by people's "expectation that all would be in place from the beginning". This person was suggesting that a certain degree of tolerance was required in coping with the problems experienced by any major upheaval. In a related comment another suggested that the speed of implementation is important. "A certain momentum is required", the person said. "A longer time frame can erode the will to change." This seems to

suggest that it might be important to proceed despite certain problems. Waiting to iron out all the difficulties before starting would probably create even bigger problems from lack of the proper spirit of change.

Another person was critical of the NTA, saying that "there may be inservice problems, but they will be accentuated by the NTA". As an example, the person pointed out that schools were advised by the Department to allow the new law course to be taught only by qualified teachers. Some schools, however, acted contrary to this advice and the NTA was pointing to the problems teachers were having with the law course as evidence of the Department's failure to provide proper inservice. It sounded as if the person believed the NTA would conspire to bring down the reorganization, or at least to portray it in its worst light. This sort of comment, regardless of its accuracy, does not have to be especially prevalent for it to be a potential major source of concern.

Finally, one person mentioned as a problem the inability to maintain schools at the critical size needed to make the programme viable. This was just one manifestation of the general problem, raised by many other individuals in our sample, of whether the revised programme can be run in our smallest schools, and of the degree of programme breadth which can be expected in them. This Department official was in agreement with many who believe that there is a threshold size of school below which the programme cannot work. This is not in accord with the official Department of Education position, which is that the programme can work in all schools. This issue has the potential for creating several problems in the future. What if indeed the programme cannot work in the very small schools? Must these schools be shut down and the students brought to more central, larger schools? It seems there might be much public opposition to this in many places, if the current trend towards moving back to community schools in some localities is any indication.

Must teacher allocation to these schools be made on the basis of programme, as many whom we interviewed suggested, instead of on the basis of number of students? What other possibilities exist? These are questions which will certainly need to be faced in a few years.

VIEWS OF DISTRICT OFFICE PERSONNEL

We now turn to an examination of the views expressed by the people we interviewed in twenty-five district offices throughout the Province. We chose to deal with these views next, and subsequently with those of principals and then teachers. It seems that word of the innovation was disseminated in at least this approximate order. We thought that tracing views in this order would make as much sense as any other.

Of the forty-three district office people we interviewed, thirty-five were either superintendents or assistant superintendents. The remaining eight were coordinators. This distribution reflects the facts that we explicitly asked to interview superintendents, and that usually assistant superintendents were responsible for overseeing the innovation in their districts.

Goals of the Reorganization and Their Priority

Knowledge of the official Department of Education goals of the high school reorganization was more widespread among district office people than among any other group we interviewed. About one-half of the people interviewed mentioned increasing student maturity and bringing Newfoundland schools in line with those in the rest of Canada as Departmental goals. Somewhat more than this, about two-thirds, mentioned broadening the curriculum as a Departmental goal. In response to the question about envisaged effects of the reorganization about the same number (about one-half) mentioned greater student maturity and a broadened curriculum. None, however, mentioned alignment with the rest of Canada as an envisaged effect of the reorganization, nor did any think that it should be a criterion in judging its success and failure. Regarding the priority of goals, the goals of broadening the curriculum and increasing student maturity were named as having the most priority, with the alignment goal as having no priority.

One interesting finding was the number of people who said that the institution of the new high school programme was a political move of one sort or another. For example, over ten percent of the people said that the innovation was brought in as a response to declining enrollments and the consequent threat of teacher layoffs; over ten percent said that the government was responding to pressure from the NTA (probably in light of pending teacher layoffs); slightly fewer than ten percent claimed the move was designed to reduce the potential work force and thus the unemployment rate. Altogether, more than fifteen percent of the people interviewed said that the introduction of the new high school was politically motivated in one way or another.

Beliefs in the political motivation were sometimes reflected in the view that there were hidden reasons behind the reorganization. For example, one superintendent was curious because the government took such a strong initiative on such an expensive project during a time of fiscal restraint. Another mentioned that the real reason was to respond to the problem of teacher layoffs, despite the fact that reaching some sort of national standard was later publicly offered as the reason. Yet another, after representing accurately the official Departmental goals of the reorganization, added that there were two "hidden reasons: to keep students off the labour market, and to keep teachers employed". Finally, one superintendent felt that the NTA had thoughtlessly speeded up the innovation by putting pressure on the government, and then used the fact that the innovation had proceeded without adequate preparation as a further pressure tactic.

Another interesting comment which a few superintendents made was that this innovation was in no respect a grassroots movement. As one said, the innovation "did not arise from a call from educators or from any strictly educational need". Rather the reorganization was an innovation which proceeded from the top, down. While these people were not pleased with this top-down approach, at least an equal number recognized that the innovation was not from the grass-

roots but were not bothered by this. They were willing to concede that the philosophy of the innovation was sound, and that it was their job now to see that it was implemented properly. One individual, for example, said that "shaking up the system can be good of itself".

Other interesting differences and similarities between the views of Department people and district office people were found in responses to the questions we asked about the criteria for judging the success or failure of the innovation. Among the Department people a broadened curriculum and greater student choice of programme were the criteria most often mentioned, each by about 75% of the people interviewed. Among district office people these criteria were mentioned fewer times, broadening by slightly less than one-half of the people and individualization by about one-fourth. More significantly though is the fact that about 85% of the district office people said that a decrease in the dropout rate is a criterion of success and only about 5% said it was not a criterion. This contrasts with responses from the Department people, who were divided about equally on this issue. Department people were equally divided on the issue of whether or not greater ease of career choice and lessening the gap in offerings between large and small schools were criteria. In the district offices about one-half said that greater ease of career choice is a criterion of success and only 15% said it was not. Almost one-half said that narrowing the gap between large and small schools is not a criterion while only one-fifth thought that it was a criterion.

The large difference in view between Department people and district office people over the use of dropout rate in judging the new programme is difficult to explain. It is clear though that many held their views strongly. One superintendent said that "retention is crucial. The whole scheme will be a failure if retention is not improved". Another superintendent, who also said that the dropout

rate is a criterion, went on to hypothesize about the causes of dropouts. "The dropout rate", he said, "depends largely on what work is available. In Labrador the mines require grade 11, but fish plants will take you after grade 7." From neither of these comments do we get an idea of why the individuals believe that the dropout rate is a criterion, or of why the district office view differs by so much from the Department one. One might speculate that the difference results from proximity to those, namely parents, who are likely to apply pressure to reduce the number of dropouts. But then do parents apply a lot of pressure here? Maybe the difference is due to the proximity to those who are dropping out, to being able to put "faces on the statistics". Again, however, this is speculation.

A further interesting contrast between the views of Department of Education people and the views of those in the district offices concerns the question of whether closing the gap between large and small schools should be a criterion in judging the new programme. Recall that the Department people were divided half and half on this issue. The district office people on the other hand responded quite differently. Of the total number of district office people interviewed, about one-half thought that closing the gap was not a criterion while only about one-fifth thought that it was. (If we consider only those that commented on this issue the proportions increase to seven out of ten and three out of ten, respectively.) Many superintendents basically took it as a fact of life that larger schools will always be able to offer more than smaller ones. Since the gap is inevitable, they reason that it is not fair to judge the new program on the basis of it. Despite the inevitability of the gap, many superintendents did see a ray of hope for small schools. One superintendent, for example, thought that the new programme might provide a mechanism to increase retention in small schools. He said: "It is inevitable the gap will widen. The important

question is whether small schools can do enough with the programme to improve retention." Another stated that despite the existence of the gap the "important point is that small schools are seen as being able to offer a broader programme". In other words an inequity between large and small schools which remains the same, or even one which increases somewhat, is still consistent with improved programmes in the smaller schools. Such inequity, coupled with improvement in small schools is thought by many to be tolerable and even to be an advance on the current situation.

Many other interesting remarks were made about what should mark the success of the programme. Even though most of these remarks occurred infrequently, they are worth citing as examples of the range of views that exists. Some felt that we must look first to people's attitudes in evaluating the programme. They felt that the major mark of success would be students' and teachers' feeling better about school. In a similar vein some felt that we should look for indicators of success in a changed atmosphere in the school and in changed relationships between teachers and students. These people felt that schools should become more democratic institutions and that teachers should treat students more as adults. One coordinator, for example, said that we should look for "a human organization compatible with the development of type A objectives" (These objectives deal with the development of moral and citizenship values). Still others thought that the mark of success of the new programme would be the abolition of the practise of streaming. One assistant superintendent indicated that his board does not allow streaming nor does it allow "pre-packaged programmes" for different types of students.

The Meaning of the Goals

We received some indication in our interviews of what district office people understood 'maturity' and 'broadened curriculum' to

mean. However, there was little consensus on this issue and an even smaller amount of in-depth analysis. According to the Department of Education documents we examined, and according to what was said in the Department interviews, maturity is a broadly defined notion consisting of social, mental, emotional, and physical components. Each of these components but the physical one was mentioned by one district office person or another. Although only about three-fourths of our sample responded to the questions on this issue, about one-third of these equated greater maturity with the ability to make decisions about one's future career. Another one-fifth identified being more mature simply with being a year older and a similar number said it had to do with being more independent. Other comments on the meaning of maturity were made in great variety but they were offered by fewer than ten percent of those who responded.

Less diversity of opinion was found in analyses of the notion broadening the curriculum than in the statements about maturity. Basically, the district office people understand broadening in terms of the provision of more courses, particularly in areas neglected in the past such as fine arts and vocational. Only about ten percent of the people, though, made any mention of the idea that the curriculum would be broadened without an attendant increase in depth. This idea is central to the notion of broadening according to those at the Department. The seriousness of this incomplete view of broadening is not known. It is possible that many of the people we interviewed knew that there would be no increase in depth but did not think to mention it.

Perceived Problems

The problems with the innovation perceived by district office people and those perceived by Department people were similar in some respects but differed in others. Both groups identified problems related to shortage of teachers, funds, inservice, and guidance. As

one might expect more district office people, by almost three to one, perceived a shortage of teachers as a problem (34% vs. 13%). The numbers of district office people perceiving insufficient guidance as a problem was also three times more than the number of Department people, but the numbers were small in both cases, 13% vs. 5%. An unexpected result was that more Department people than district office people perceived insufficient inservice as a problem, about one-half vs. about one-fifth. This would be surprising to one who assumes that people at district offices take the brunt of teacher and principal complaints about the need for more inservice. However, it was our experience that lack of sufficient inservice was not blamed primarily on the people at the local district office, although to be sure a good deal of blame was placed there. Rather, there was more criticism of the Department for not providing the mechanism and the funds for more inservice. This, of course, is a separate issue from who indeed should bear the blame. In any case, if it is true that the Department receives most of the criticism, then that would explain the fact that more at the Department perceive lack of sufficient inservice as a problem.

District office personnel also mentioned some problems not noted at all by Department officials. These include: 1) troubles with the provision of facilities, mentioned by about 40% of district office people; 2) the need for more for slower students in the new programme, cited by over 20%; and 3) the need to dispel certain ingrained patterns of thinking which teachers have developed under the old system, noted by almost 20%. In addition, about 40% of those at the district offices spoke of the poor match between teacher qualifications and the demands of the new programme, an issue raised by about 25% of Departmental officials. With regard to the issue of slower students, the sentiment of those who felt that they would have problems under the reorganization was that there just were not enough suitable courses from which the slower students could choose. One

coordinator felt that this would mean that some students would not graduate until they were 20 or 21 years of age.

The issue of breaking established thinking patterns of teachers mentioned by about one-fifth of our sample is an interesting one. Two such patterns mentioned by one superintendent were the perceptions that students need to be streamed and need to be sorted into grade levels. This official felt that "students should be able to pick and choose courses from all the levels offered" and that "students of all age levels should be able to mix in courses". A similar sentiment was expressed by an assistant superintendent who thought that teachers did not realize the difference between a credit system and a grade system. Another superintendent thought that teachers would have to "get rid of basic-versus-luxury thinking". By this he meant that the notion must be dispelled that courses like mathematics are basic and courses like creative theatre are luxury. These comments might be considered by individual teachers and by staffs as a whole to see whether, first of all, they are sound ideas, and second of all, whether they are applicable to their situations.

The problem of matching currently employed teachers to courses in the new programme also received a fair amount of attention. There were no attacks on teachers among these comments, but the existence of a perceived problem was clear. Many superintendents are finding it difficult to properly match the new programme to the existing staffs in their schools. Some feel that retraining of teachers is required here, for "the programme offerings should not be subservient to the abilities of the teachers in the schools". Others feel that the only route is to try to build a suitable programme around the abilities of the teachers currently available. Some feel frustrated in this effort by such things as the teachers' collective agreement which, in their view, can prohibit or interfere with the allocation of teachers that the superintendent might think is the best. However, despite this problem more than one district office person said that

teachers were doing their best to accommodate the programme. The quite serious question arises, however, of whether retraining of teachers is needed to make the new programme succeed, or of whether the programme will be moulded to suit existing teacher capabilities.

A large number of other problems were raised, but only some of these will be mentioned here. As with the Department people there was some criticism of the NTA by the district office personnel. One superintendent, for example, said that he thought "teachers are doing their utmost to accommodate the programme, despite the NTA stance".

There was also some interesting comments concerning the public's perception of the reorganization. Some superintendents thought that many parents believe that this new programme is the mechanism for solving all the problems which have been facing education in the Province. One said that with the announcement of the reorganization "people's expectations for facilities, etc., were suddenly increased drastically as if grade twelve would solve all the problems of the past. This was seen as a mechanism for getting everything they always wished they had". An assistant superintendent commenting on this same issue of increased expectations said that there is a "need to educate the parents -- do they expect something much different than they can get?".

We learned much from the district office people we interviewed. They addressed many salient issues concerning the high school reorganization and people should seriously consider the insights they offered. No less so, however, one should consider also the insights of the principals and teachers which appear in the following two sections.

VIEWS OF PRINCIPALS

The twenty-three principals interviewed were from schools scattered throughout the Province, from small isolated ones to large urban ones. We expect their views are reasonably representative of the variety of views that exists among principals in the Province as a whole.

Goals of the Reorganization and Their Priority

One-half, or slightly more than this, of the principals mentioned each of the Department goals of increasing maturity, broadening the curriculum, and coming in line with the rest of Canada. Most principals also gave very straightforward answers to this question, probably indicating that they had taken some pains to make themselves aware of the official reasoning for the innovation.

It is interesting that about one-half of the principals responded to the direct question of the goals of the innovation by saying that decreasing the dropout rate is a goal. They were the only group to indicate in large numbers that increasing retention was a goal of the innovation. Large proportions of both the Department and the district office people considered a decreased dropout rate as criterion for evaluating the innovation. This was also true of the principals. Over three-quarters of them said that increased retention would be a criterion of success.

As a group the principals were less concerned with hidden motives for the reorganization than were the district office people. Only one person mentioned each of decreasing the unemployment rate, responding to teacher layoffs, and giving in to pressure from interest groups, as motivating factors in the Department's decision.

One principal was able to provide a summary of some of the events leading up to the reorganization plan, as he recalled them. According to this principal, people in the Department were already working, before the grade twelve announcement, on a scheme to create

a "rational mechanism to coordinate the various curriculum committees whose advise was often conflicting". There was a committee working on this task, concentrating on the grades seven to eleven levels. When the grade twelve announcement was made by the Minister of Finance "it came as a shock" to this group. All of a sudden they had to change the reason for their existence, with the new goal of getting a "coherent three-year credit system without adding to the difficulty of the existing programme". As part of this change of emphasis work on grades seven to nine was dropped to be taken up later, this principal reported. To the extent that this history is correct it gives more credibility to the view of some district office people that the reorganization is not something that started with educators but rather started with the politicians. The only additional evidence we have for the accuracy of the historical account is that one Department of Education official recounted a very similar sequence of events.

The priority of goals that principals expressed differed from that of district office people in that they placed more priority on broadening the curriculum than on increasing student maturity (35% to 25%). For the district office people the priority of these two goals was judged more on an equal footing, with a slight tendency to believe that the maturity issue was more important. Another finding is that principals, just as Department and district office people, place little priority on the goal of bringing our system in line with the rest of Canada.

In discussing criteria for judging the success of the innovation, principals' comments paralleled closely the comments of those at the district offices regarding broadening the curriculum, increasing student maturity, bringing the system in line with the mainland, decreasing the dropout rate, and decreasing the academic emphasis of the curriculum. However, principals had almost twice the tendency of district office people to say that providing individualization

of student choice should be a criterion, and more principals (almost 60%) than either Department or district office people thought that increased ease of career choice should be a criterion.

Relatively more principals than either Department or district office personnel thought that closing the gap between large and small schools is a criterion for judging the success of the programme. All but one of the principals who thought it should be a criterion were from small schools (by comparison with the largest schools in the Province). It is thus predominantly principals of small schools who sense the importance of closing the gap in offerings between large and small schools.

The principals who thought that narrowing the gap between large and small schools should not be used to judge the success of the programme more often than not came from relatively large schools, within or close to large urban centres. Several reasons were given by these principals for thinking that closing the gap was not important. Some principals thought that schools should be compared only to those of comparable sizes. Schools of vastly different size are going to differ inevitably, these people reasoned, and this is not a great problem. As one principal of a small school said, "Larger schools should be expected to offer relatively broader programmes". Another principal of a relaitvely large urban school thought that as long as small schools are "better off than under the grade system" it is not as important that they achieve equality of programme with the larger schools. Another thought that although the issue of equality might have some importance, we must be cautious: "We shouldn't tear down small schools that are already good [and by implication replace them with large schools] in the name of equality". Each of these principals raised ideas for all associated with education in the Province to ponder.

The Meaning of the Goals

The principals' views of the meaning of 'maturity' were very

similar to those expressed by the district office people. There was a broad spectrum of ideas with a few people at each point on the spectrum. Some thought of maturity in terms of social maturity, others in terms of independence, responsibility, fuller awareness of self, and ability to make decisions for the future. As with the district office people some thought of being more mature simply as being older. Some even thought of it in terms of the greater academic background possessed by students. Views of the meaning of 'maturity' are indeed diverse.

It was not unusual in the interviews to find that certain people focussed their discussions around students destined for university, as if there were no students doing anything else. This has been mentioned before. This narrow view is reflected in one principal's comments on the meaning of 'maturity' when he equated maturing with developing the self-discipline to handle university.

Another principal associated maturation with the willingness to leave one's home community. This principal thought that the success of the new programme could be judged in part "by the number of kids who leave their home turf". Another concluded that the students from his school "don't need maturing since they don't flunk out". A similar view was expressed by others. For example, some expressed the view that it was only certain students who needed more maturing before graduating from high school, but that it was not fair to hold others back an additional year just to accomodate those who are somewhat slower to mature. This illustrates that the justification of the high school reorganization in terms of greater student maturity is not accepted self-evidently by all those in the field. Certainly problems with this justification were expressed, from the challenge that schools retard rather than promote maturation to the point mentioned above that many students are not going to profit from this extra year to mature since they do not "suffer" from immaturity.

We received relatively little information on principals' notions of the meaning of 'broadening the curriculum'. Those few who did respond expressed varying opinions, from the provision of more for lower ability students to the provision of more "Mickey Mouse" courses, as one principal put it. In the absence of more comprehensive data, however, little more can be said.

Perceived Problems

Some significant contrasts emerged between the principals' perceptions of problems with the innovation and those of the other groups interviewed. The smallest proportions perceiving shortages of teachers, funds, and inservice as problems were found among the principals, although they were very similar to teachers in this regard. One would think that if any group ought to feel pressure from a shortage of teachers it ought to be principals. Similarly one would think that, after teachers, principals would be among the most directly affected by insufficient inservice.

Principals did not mention that they foresaw any problem in matching teacher qualifications to jobs or in changing teacher mindsets which are more suited to the old high school than the reorganized one. These were problems suggested by substantial proportions of the district office people.

Principals did, however, foresee problems in some areas where one might expect. For example, over one-third of the principals thought that they were going to need more guidance counselling for students under the new system and that they did not see the extra counsellors forthcoming. This concern was cast in different ways but one principal thought that "the need for a guidance counsellor is emphasized by the fact that we are going to lose the closeness of the homeroom teacher". He thought that they would lose homeroom teachers because few teachers would be able to teach a large number of the courses in the diverse programme that students would be taking.

Over one-fourth of the principals predicted that there would be problems with timetabling in the reorganized high school and with keeping records of students' progress. Many believed that they would need more clerical help and were concerned that there was no money to pay for it. Almost one-fourth thought that they would have problems with students opting for the easiest course when they were given the choice. This concerned one principal especially with regard to his brightest students. "These students", he said, "have to go beyond the government guidelines. Those capable of doing law should not opt for the easier health course".

There were many other problems mentioned, often by only one principal. One of these is worth mentioning for it could be consequential if it is widespread in a particular type of school. The problem involves principals of all-grade schools looking to the primary and elementary teachers of their schools who have the special talents needed to offer the new courses on the high school agenda. One principal of an all-grade school said that "those with special talents will be moved to the high school", something he thought was a bad thing. Another principal of an all-grade school looked at this differently, thinking that here was a point where the smaller schools had an advantage over the larger ones. This principal did not plan wholesale shifts of teaching staff but he thought that he might, for example, be able to use his primary and elementary art teacher to offer a few classes in high school. Without knowing the consequences of such staff rearrangements, this practise should be monitored.

Overall the principals we interviewed reacted positively toward the innovation. Some saw it as a challenge which stimulated them for the first time in a while. One saw it as beneficial because it shook up a system which was suffering from some stagnation. Another complained that the "lack of planning at the Department means we can't plan for next year", but at the same time said he did not want to overdramatize this for there are the same problems with any-

thing new. What was also significant is that aside from scattered comments like the one just mentioned the principals as a group did not try to throw any blame or criticism onto any other educational group in the Province.

VIEWS OF TEACHERS

We personally interviewed twenty-six teachers from all over the Province and received completed questionnaires from 129 other teachers in the twenty-four schools we visited. The interviews and the questionnaires were not designed to elicit exactly the same information, so there was some difference in the information we received from both. However, there was overlap in purpose, and there was also much overlap in the responses we received. Even the small number of teachers we interviewed seemed to give us a fairly representative view of how teachers in general view the high school reorganization, based upon the close similarity of interview and questionnaire data.

We found much similarity between the views of teachers and those of other groups. However, examining the views of the other groups has also revealed that each tends to stand out in a few areas. Some of the main differences are reiterated here to facilitate further comparisons as the teacher responses are discussed. The Department people stood out in their choice of increased individualization and decreased academic emphasis as criteria for judging the programme, and in their belief that lack of sufficient inservice was the greatest problem. District office people thought more than any other group that closing the gap between large and small school offerings was not a criterion of success. They also thought to the largest degree that lack of sufficient funds and sufficient numbers of teachers, and finding teachers with the proper pattern of qualifications and with the proper frame of reference for the new programme were the greatest problems. Principals thought more than other groups that lack of sufficient guidance was a problem, that students would tend to opt for the easiest routes, and that record keeping and timetabling would be troublesome. We will illustrate that the teachers, too, tended to focus more than other groups on

particular issues.

Goals of the Reorganization and Their Priority

Except for the district office people, who were the most knowledgeable in this area, the teachers fared as well as the other groups in their recollection of the official goals of the reorganization. In the interviews nearly 40% of the teachers mentioned the goal of increasing student maturity; over one-half the goal of broadening the curriculum; and over 40% the goal of bringing Newfoundland schools in line with those in the rest of Canada. In the questionnaire teachers responded similarly, with somewhat more mentioning the alignment goal (about 60%). There was considerable agreement on the priority of these goals. About 60% of the teachers we interviewed believed that the broadening goal was the most important, compared to a little over one-third of the principals and the district office people. Only about one-fifth of the teachers thought that the goal of increasing student maturity was the most important, compared to about an equal proportion in the case of principals, but to twice the proportion in the case of district office people and to three times the proportion in the case of Department of Education people. As with the three other groups the goal of aligning with the rest of Canada was given priority by only a very small proportion of teachers.

Regarding criteria for judging the programme, the following contrasts and similarities emerged. A decreased dropout rate was considered by more principals and district office people than anything else to be a mark of success of the programme. This was true also for the teachers, with nearly three-fourths of them saying that this was a mark of success. Large proportions of both the principals and the district office people also thought that broadening the curriculum is a mark of a successful programme. With the teachers, however, fewer than one-third thought that broadening the curriculum is a criterion of success, even though according to the

questionnaire about two-thrids thought that a broadened curriculum would be one of the effects of the innovation. These facts first of all reinforce the view which has been becoming more apparent throughout this report, namely, that the dropout rate is of major concern to a large number of educators in this Province, whatever the sector of the system one looks at. The facts also suggest that although teachers knew that broadening the curriculum was a Departmental goal of the reorganization and that it was also the most important of the three goals the Department offered, they were not prepared to say that in their minds it was an important goal. Certainly, other goals, such as closing the gap between large and small school offerings, facilitating students' career choices, increasing achievement, and increasing post-secondary attendance, seem to be equally important or more important to teachers. This distinguishes them from the other groups, in that broadening the curriculum was chosen by at least 44% of people in those groups as a criterion for judging the programme.

Teachers were more concerned than other groups with the Department's real motivations in implementing the new high school programme. More than 40% mentioned one or the other of the following as possible hidden goals: avoiding teacher layoffs, decreasing the unemployment rate, decreasing the dropout rate. About one-fourth just thought that the change was politically motivated. However, there was little reference to specific political pressure to which the Department or the Government was responding. We did find teachers hypothesizing that the real motives are to "make the government look innovative" or to make those in the Department look like they were taking action rather than doing nothing.

The Meaning of the Goals

We have little to report on teachers perceptions of the meaning of the Department of Education goals, since we did not address this topic in the questionnaire and only about one-third of the teachers interviewed were asked to comment on the topic. It just seemed that

with the teachers there were other more important issues to consider, and our open interview format allowed us to pursue these. We have only one worthwhile result to report.

Over half of the teachers who responded to this topic equated maturity with the ability to make vocational decisions. This response coincides with that of the district office employees and with that of the principals. More people in both of these groups defined maturity in terms of decision making than in terms of anything else.

Perceived Problems

Teachers perceptions of the problems with the innovation were different from those of the other groups. This strengthens the idea that each group perceives the innovation from its own particular perspective, while failing to see the issues which most concern those in the other groups. There is a degree of correspondence of opinion, as has been pointed out already in the analysis of the other groups, but the differences are telling.

Teachers' perceptions of problems due to shortages of teachers, funds, and inservice were similar to those of the principals. Slightly fewer than one-fourth of the teachers thought that insufficient numbers of teachers would be a problem. Less than 4% of the teachers foresaw lack of sufficient funds to be a problem, whereas nearly one-half of the district office people thought so. Less than one-fifth of the teachers saw insufficient inservice as a problem. We found that really the greatest proportion thinking that inservice would be a problem was found among the Department of Education people. District office people and principals were like teachers in that only a small proportion thought there was a problem here.

Teachers stood out in their view that there were problems with the supply of materials. About one-third of both those interviewed and those who completed questionnaires had this complaint. This was a much higher proportion than in any of the other groups. Also about

one-fourth of the teachers mentioned a problem with increased teacher workload under the new system. This was not a factor in the responses of those in the other groups. Materials and workload are, of course, aspects which touch teachers very closely. Another perception of a larger proportion of teachers than of any other group was that the innovation was implemented prematurely.

We see that many of one group's greatest concerns are the concerns of its members alone. This suggests that if there is to be cooperation between groups in the educational system of this Province, and if there is to be coordination of effort, those in each group must try to understand things as those in the others see them. Those in each group must try to see the problems those in other groups are likely to experience, and to judge their actions accordingly. As an example one might consider the complaint of a teacher that "a lot of Department policy is a reaction to problems which their lack of planning caused". There may be some truth to this. However, the teacher revealed a failure to put himself in the place of the other. Of necessity, it seems to us, much of the Department's policy on this innovation will be reactionary, formulated in response to problems which occur from time to time. Although it is always good to plan ahead, no person or group can be expected to envisage all the possible problems which might occur. This teacher may have been expecting too much.

Throughout our interviews, though, in addition to comments such as the complaint mentioned above, there was also a share of goodwill and enthusiasm. For example, one teacher said, after mentioning several problems with the reorganization, that "none of this should defeat the system [the new high school system] which is basically good". Another teacher, after complaining that he had not found out until September that he would have to teach the new law course with no inservice, said that he "viewed it as a challenge, not as something imposed".

Finally, as an example of the type of issue which is difficult for those other than teachers and maybe principals to understand, but which must be understood if a true cooperative effort is to prevail, consider the following remarks from one teacher. In discussing the nature of one credit courses she said: "One credit courses should be semesterized. There is no continuity with one class every second day. I don't develop a feel for the kids, meeting them so infrequently. The kids would get more out of semesterized courses". Clearly, here is a teacher with a serious concern. It is also the concern of many others whom we interviewed. It is just that this teacher formulated the problem for us better than anyone else.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We learned much about the new high school reorganization in our travels throughout the Province, meeting with people from all sectors of the educational system. We drew the following major conclusions:

1. The notion that this innovation was designed to meet three goals, and by implication was designed in response to three needs, is only a simplified and somewhat misleading view of the picture as perceived by those interviewed.

2. Many of the effects of the innovation which people envisaged were difficult to reconcile with what one might reasonably expect the reorganization to achieve.

3. A significant number of those we interviewed attributed ulterior motives to those who were in other sectors of the educational community.

4. The members of each group tended to focus on two or three concerns unique to their own particular group.

In what follows immediately these conclusions are elaborated.

The Three Goals

The three Departmental goals did not dominate our discussions with people. One of them, the goal to align our schools with those in the rest of Canada, was hardly mentioned at all and never given priority. Of the other two goals, the goal to broaden the curriculum was given much attention and a majority thought that it was an important thing to achieve. The goal of increasing student maturity tended to receive somewhat less attention than the broadening goal but was thought important by many. This is not surprising given the great deal of emphasis which was placed on this goal in the Departmental documents on the innovation. There, one finds elaborate definitions of 'maturity' in its emotional, social, and intellectual aspects, as have been described. There was also considerable diversity of

views in these definitions, a diversity which was also found in the views of those interviewed.

However, the story of goals did not end here. From people in every group we heard of goals, expected effects, and criteria of assessment other than the three suggested by the official Department of Education position. The goal to decrease the dropout rate was given as much or more attention by those in each group as any other goal. At times in our interviews one might have thought that decreasing the dropout rate was the prime reason for existence of the innovation. Other things, such as easing the ordeal of selecting a career, making students more suitable for post-secondary institutions and increasing participation therein, and giving students more individual control over the selection of their programmes, came up over and over again. All of this led us to conclude that this innovation cannot properly be characterized as an attempt to meet three particular goals. Rather, this innovation is seen by those of the educational community as a means of meeting many desires, maybe ones which the old high school system appeared not to be able to satisfy.

Expectations of the Innovation

Many people seemed to have the hope that the changed high school would cure many of our Province's ills. People said that it would "further the development of our society", "break the cycle of employment", "produce better citizens", and "promote life-long interests". Many of these sound like many of the hopes people have for universal liberal education. Indeed, it is a widespread view in our society that education can help us solve a wide variety of social problems. In some sense, then, it appears that educators in this province are placing a good deal of hope in this reorganization as a means of reaching many of the long desired goals of education.

Attribution of Hidden Motives

Many spoke as if those in the other sectors were adversaries, as if each group had to protect its own interest. Others spoke as if those in the other groups were conspiring to create trouble for the system. We do not have the information to say whether or not there is any truth to these allegations. What is certain, though, is that regardless of whether or not some in the system have ulterior motives, just the thought that there are could be harmful. We should ask whether this type of thinking and the atmosphere it creates is conducive to efforts to improve education in our Province. Maybe it shows that checks and balances are built into the system so that no single group can dominate activities. On the other hand, maybe it indicates that there is less spirit of cooperation than desirable.

Uniqueness of Concerns

Each group tended to focus on a few issues which other groups ignored. Presumably these issues reflect the concerns which most closely touched those in each group in the role they have to play. The following chart displays the main differences found:

Educational Group	Major Focus of Concern
Department of Education officials	- individualization of student choice - decreased academic emphasis in the curriculum - problems due to insufficient inservice
District Office officials	- shortage of teachers - shortage of funds - finding suitably qualified teachers - finding teachers with proper mindsets
Principals	- shortage of guidance counsellors - timetabling - record keeping

Teachers	- innovation implemented prematurely - political motivation of innovation - shortage of materials - increased workload

These differences in focus are perhaps not surprising, and in fact were to a large extent predictable. One readily expects that those with different roles to play in any organization will tend to see things somewhat differently. Everyone sees things from his or her perspective. However, since those in each role in education are working towards a common end, there might be some benefits in greater coordination of perspectives. For such coordination to be best achieved, it is necessary that those in each group make an effort to see things somewhat from the perspective of those in the other groups. Accomplishing this would allow each to base his or her actions upon trying to do those things which assist those in other roles to perform their functions most effectively.

It seems to us that this innovation was launched without reference to current research on the process of educational change. Knowing this research, one could have predicted that people in different educational sectors would have viewed the innovation differently. One would also have realized that much is at stake, personally, in any innovation. Sensitivity to the perspectives of others was not expressed by those we met.

Profound questions concerning people's very concept of education, and concerning their own roles and competencies are raised in any large innovation. The literature on educational change suggests that, among many other things, the success of an innovation depends heavily upon each group beginning to see things in a fundamentally different way. Fundamental changes in perspective are not made easily. In addition, there is often no particular incentive for many of those who must carry out the implementation. The idea of

an innovation, as was the case here, often arises at a high level in the educational bureaucracy, and is designed to meet needs perceived by people at that level. Those at the district and school level often do not perceive these same needs. If the innovation cannot be seen by people at these levels as meeting some need they perceive, there is little incentive for them to make the changes necessary to implement the innovation faithfully. The evidence now quite strongly suggests that this sort of change in perspective of one's role, of one's concept of education, and of other fundamental beliefs is not accomplished in brief familiarization sessions. It is achieved only when there is deep personal involvement in analyzing the central concepts and structures of the innovation.

As a final word it can be said that this innovation is at little risk of failure, in the sense that an additional year of high school and a credit system will virtually inevitably be installed in our high schools. However, evaluation cannot focus on these aspects alone, nor on these plus the three official Departmental goals. Evaluation will have to focus on a broad range of areas in which this innovation will possibly affect high school education; should take into account the unique insights of individuals; and must look at the success of the innovation from the perspectives of those in each sector of the educational community.

Footnotes

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3. Barton, A.H. and Lazarsfeld, P.F. Qualitative Support of Theory. In G.J. McCall and J.L. Simmons (Eds.), Issues in Participant Observation: A Text and Reader. Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969.

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5. Denzin, Sociological Methods.

6. Phillips, B.S. Social Research: Strategies and Tactics, 3rd. Ed. New York: MacMillan, 1976.

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APPENDIX

GOALS OF THE REORGANIZED HIGH SCHOOL

Interview Schedule for Department of Education Administrative Officials

Lead into the interview by explaining that we are attempting to document the perceptions of various people of the goals of the reorganized high school programme, of the motivation for those goals, and of the priority which any of them have over others. As a warm-up question ask the person to relate his or her understandings of the origins of the idea for reorganizing the high schools.

1. For what reason in your mind was the innovation proposed? What do you believe those involved hoped it would achieve? (Ask only if not answered in the warm-up question.)

2. What benefits in your opinion are likely to ensue because of . . . ? (Fill in, in their turn, any effects of the innovation suggested in the answer to question one for which the motivation can be reasonably probed.)

3. Do you think that any of the reasons for reorganizing the high school are more compelling than others? (Probe to distinguish reports of the person's own perceptions of the priority of goals from reports of the perceptions which others have.)

4. What do you understand " . . . " to mean? (Fill in any crucial expressions such as "broadened curriculum" or "more mature students" which are used in the response to question one. Probe to distinguish reports of the person's own understanding from those of others.)

5. Are you able to envisage important differences between typical graduates from the reorganized high school and those from the old high school? (If the answer is positive, ask:) What are some of these differences? Do you feel some of these are more significant than others? (If the answer is negative, ask the person to explain.)

6. Do you believe the curriculum in the reorganized high school will differ in important ways from the curriculum in the old high school? (If the answer is positive, ask:) What important differences do you envisage? Do you think some of these are more important than others? (If the answer is negative, ask the person to explain.)

7. What do you think are the most important things to look for in judging the success or failure of the reorganized high school?

Questions 8 to 13 which follow might have already been answered in response to question 7. Proceed with those questions which have not yet been answered. Explain them to the interviewee. Say that the following questions will ask him or her to imagine certain situations occurring after the high school reorganization has been in place for some time. Tell the person that he or she does not have to believe that the situations have a high or low probability of occurring, and that you do not intend to imply that they do. Say you are just asking "What if such-and-such were the case?" Finally, explain to the person that you want him or her to judge how such situations should affect the evaluation of the success of the innovation.

Make it clear that you are not asking how the overall evaluation should turn out in each case, but rather in which direction, if any, each supposed occurrence would tend to sway the evaluation.

After the description of each hypothetical situation ask: "In which direction, if any, would this tend to sway the evaluation of the innovation?

8. Suppose that the achievement of graduates from the reorganized high school is the same as that of graduates from the old high school.

9. Suppose that the critical thinking ability of graduates from the reorganized high school is the same as that of graduates from the old high school.

10. Suppose that the percentage of graduates from the reorganized high school attending post-secondary institutions is no different from the percentage of graduates from the old high school attending.

11. Suppose that students in the reorganized high school take substantially the same range of courses as those in the old high school.

12. Suppose that the degree of individualization in the reorganized high school is the same as that in the old high school.

13. Suppose that the academic emphasis of the reorganized high school is the same as that of the old high school.

14. Suppose that graduates from the reorganized high school experience no more or less ease in selecting a career than graduates from the old high school.

15. Suppose that students from all types of schools take a broader range of courses in the reorganized high school than in the old high school, but that the degree of difference in offerings between large and small schools does not change after the innovation.

16. Suppose that the percentage of students finishing high school is the same in the reorganized high school as it was in the old high school.

Tell the person that the question just asked was the final one in which he or she will have to imagine certain hypothetical situations. Also say that you have one more question to ask.

17. In which respects, if any, do you think that reorganizing the high school programme is going to give problems? (If some things are mentioned, ask:) How do you think such problems might be avoided?

Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Date: _____

GOALS OF THE REORGANIZED HIGH SCHOOL

Interview Schedule for District Office Officials, Principals, and Teachers

Lead into the interview by explaining that we are attempting to document the perceptions of various people of the goals of the reorganized high school programme, of the motivation for those goals, and of the priority which any of them have over others. As a warm-up question ask the person to relate his or her understandings of the origins of the idea for reorganizing the high schools.

1. For what reason in your mind was the innovation proposed? What do you believe those involved hoped it would achieve? (Ask only if not answered in the warm-up question.)

2. What benefits in your opinion are likely to ensue because of . . . ? (Fill in, in their turn, any effects of the innovation suggested in the answer to question one for which the motivation can be reasonably probed.)

3. Do you think that any of the reasons for reorganizing the high school were considered more compelling than others?

4. What do you understand " . . . " to mean? (Fill in any crucial expressions such as "broadened curriculum" or "more mature students" which are used in the response to question one. Probe to distinguish reports of the person's own understanding from those of others.)

5. Do you have your own reasons for thinking the high schools should be reorganized?

6. Are you able to envisage important differences between typical graduates from your reorganized high school(s) and those from your old high school(s)? (If the answer is positive, ask:) What are some of these differences? Do you feel some of these are more significant than others? (If the answer is negative, ask the person to explain.)

7. Do you believe the curriculum in your reorganized high school(s) will differ in important ways from the curriculum in your old high school(s)? (If the answer is positive, ask:) What important differences do you envisage? Do you think some of these are more important than others? (If the answer is negative, ask the person to explain.)

8. What do you think are the most important things to look for in judging the success or failure of the reorganization in your school(s)?

Questions 9 to 17 which follow might have already been answered in response to question 8. Proceed with those questions which have not yet been answered. Explain them to the interviewee. Say that the following questions will ask him or her to imagine certain situations occurring after the high school reorganization has been in place for some time. Tell the person that he or she does not have to believe that the situations have a high or low probability of occurring, and that you do not intend to imply that they do. Say you are just asking "What if such-and-such were the case?" Finally, explain to the person that you want him or her to judge how such situations should affect the evaluation of the success of the innovation.

Make it clear that you are not asking how the overall evaluation should turn out in each case, but rather in which direction, if any, each supposed occurrence would <u>tend</u> to sway the evaluation.

After the description of each hypothetical situation ask: "In which direction, if any, would this tend to sway the evaluation of the innovation?"

9. Suppose that the achievement of graduates from your reorganized high school(s) is the same as that of graduates from your old high school(s).

10. Suppose that the critical thinking ability of graduates from your reorganized high school(s) is the same as that of graduates from your old high school(s).

11. Suppose that the percentage of graduates from your reorganized high school(s) attending post-secondary institutions is no different from the percentage of graduates from your old high school(s) attending.

12. Suppose that students in your reorganized high school(s) take substantially the same range of courses as those in your old high school(s).

13. Suppose that the degree of individualization in your reorganized high school(s) is the same as that in your old high school(s).

14. Suppose that the academic emphasis of your reorganized high school(s) is the same as that of your old high school(s).

15. Suppose that graduates from your reorganized high school(s) experience no more or less ease in selecting a career than graduates from your old high school(s).

16. Suppose that the percentage of students finishing high school is the same in your reorganized high school(s) as it was in your old high school(s).

Tell the person that the following question will require taking a district-wide or provincial-wide perspective.

17. Suppose that students from all types of schools take a broader range of courses in the reorganized high school(s) than in the old high school(s), but that the degree of difference in offerings between large and small schools does not change after the innovation.

Tell the person that the question just asked was the final one in which he or she will have to imagine certain hypothetical situations. Also, say that you have one more question to ask. Superintendents and supervisors can be urged to concentrate on problems for their district, principals on problems for their school, and teachers on problems for the subjects they teach. They might naturally tend to do this.

18. In which respects, if any, do you think that reorganizing the high school programme is going to give problems? (If some things are mentioned, ask:) How do you think such problems might be avoided?

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GOALS OF THE REORGANIZED HIGH SCHOOL

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

Thank you for helping us with our study. We are trying to paint a picture of how various people in the educational community view the high school reorganization which is underway. We hope that this questionnaire will give us some information on your perceptions and those of other teachers. In answering this questionnaire you will have an opportunity to express your views on, among other things, the goals of the reorganization, the problems you perceive in reaching these goals, and the outcomes of a successful reorganization. The questions are open-ended rather than multiple-choice so that you can express your views in the way you believe is most suitable.

When you have completed the questionnaire, please seal it in the envelope provided and give it to your school principal. The principal will return it unopened to us. Also, we ask you not to discuss the questions with other teachers before you and they have completed the questionnaire. These steps will assure anonymity and assist in getting your views and not those of other people.

Before starting, please tell us the approximate number of students in grade 10 in your school. (_____ = Number of students)

Also, if for any question we have not provided enough room for your answer, you may use the back of the paper.

Thank you again for your time and effort. A report on our study will be available early next year. Copies will be sent to your school.

Sincerely,

Stephen Norris
Assistant Professor (Research)

1. For what reasons in your mind did those at the Department of Education wish to reorganize the high school programme?

2. Do you see good reasons, other than those of the Department of Education, for reorganizing the high school? If so, would you state them? If not, please elaborate.

3. Do you see any problems in achieving any of these goals? If so, would you state them?

4. Do you think the curriculum in your reorganized high school will differ in important ways from the curriculum in your old high school? If so, what are some of the important differences you envisage? If not, would you explain why?

The remaining questions should be answered assuming that any of the problems you now see with the reorganization eventually will be solved, and that the proposed changes are finally in place.

5. Would you expect the critical thinking ability of graduates from your reorganized high school to differ from that of graduates from your old high school? Please explain.

6. Would you expect the percentage of students finishing high school in your reorganized high school to differ from the percentage finishing in your old high school? Please explain.

7. Would you expect the percentage of graduates from your reorganized high school attending post-secondary institutions to differ from that of your old high school? Please explain.

8. Would you expect the degree to which students can decide for themselves the programmes they wish to take in your reorganized high school will differ from that in your old high school? Please explain.

9. Would you expect the achievement in regular academic subjects of graduates from your reorganized high school to differ from that of graduates from your old high school? Please explain.

10. Would you expect the balance between academic and non-academic subjects in your reorganized high school to differ from that in your old high school? Please explain.

11. Would you expect the ease with which graduates from your reorganized high school select careers to differ from that of your old high school? Please explain.